

# RIT Honors Program Student Policy Handbook

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## Statement of Values

The Honors Program recognizes academic excellence, service to the community, and exercise of leadership skills as core elements of a university experience that prepares students to play positive roles in society, and make meaningful contributions to solving problems of national and global significance. Toward maintaining a climate conducive to such growth, the Honors Program is dedicated to the principles outlined in the university's Core Values, Honor Code, Diversity Statements, Compliance Policy, and Code of Ethical Conduct. And as a community of creative, intellectually active people who act ethically with personal and professional integrity, the Honors Program is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters human dignity, provides equitable opportunity, and celebrates the contributions of all students and employees.

## Academic Requirements (Students Entering in AY 2018-19)

In order to be recognized as alumni of the RIT Honors Program, students must complete the equivalent of 15 credits of honors work by the time they receive their undergraduate degrees. We use the word “points” instead of “credits” because we recognize that students can strive above and beyond a typical academic program in co-curricular ways. Generally speaking, one *honors point* is equivalent to one credit for an academic course. For example, completing any 3-credit honors course earns 3-points. Alternatively, a student might fulfill a 3-point requirement by completing two 1-credit honors seminars, and engaging in a short-term study abroad experience. (More information on Study Abroad is included below.)

In summary, the academic requirements are these:

- First Year Honors Seminar<sup>1</sup> (3 points)
- Honors Research (3 points)
- General Education Honors work (6 points)
- Honors Senior Seminar (3 points)

Additionally, in order to remain in good standing students must meet the GPA standard specified for their year level and complete at least 1 honors point per year ([click here](#) for information about maintaining good standing in the program).

### Earning Honors Points

The first achievement is fulfilled by taking a designated Honors First Year Seminar (TDL 151H) in the first year and the final achievement is fulfilled by taking a designated Honors Senior Seminar (ITDL 450 or ITDS 450) in the final two years. The first of these courses fit into a student’s program as a general education elective. Achievements 2 and 3 can be completed in a variety of ways:

- **Honors Courses**  
Among the most common academic achievements, these courses are identified by the honors attribute in the bulletin, and often by name (e.g., MATH-241H Honors Linear Algebra).
- **Honors Options**  
An honors option is something that you do to have some fun in a standard course. It is typically a project that extends your learning above and beyond the usual expectations of the course. An honors option is supervised by the instructor and approved in advance by the Honors office. [Application forms](#) and examples of approved proposals are at the Honors Program web site. You must earn a grade of at least B– in the course in order for the honors option to count toward completion of your academic points. Successful completion of an honors option in a 3-credit course counts as 3 points.

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<sup>1</sup> This requirement is waived for students who enter the Honors Program through the internal admission process.

- **Graduate Coursework**  
You may count one graduate-level course (600 or above) toward the achievements, provided that it is not named on your Program Worksheet, and it is not found on the list of exceptions.<sup>2</sup>
  
- **Non-required Co-op or Internship**  
Points are earned according to the number of hours that you spend working full-time (at least 35 hours per week). For positions with less than 35 hours per week, points are awarded based on the total number of hours worked for the duration of the co-op or internship. Points are earned as follows:
  - 3–5 weeks (105–192 hours) earns 1 point
  - 6–10 weeks (193–367 hours) earns 2 points
  - 11–15 weeks (at least 368 hours) earns 3 points
  
- **Non-required Study Abroad**  
Points are awarded for successful completion of international academic experiences affiliated with a university, based on the duration of the experience. Points are earned as follows:
  - 1–3 weeks earns 1 point (e.g. as part of a travel-enriched course)
  - 4–9 weeks earns 2 points
  - 10–15 weeks earns 3 points
  - If the international travel is part of an honors course, the student will earn the larger of the available points (e.g., the honors points associated with the course, or the honors points listed here, but not both).
  
- **Independent Research, supervised by a faculty mentor**
  - Research is understood broadly to include investigative, exploratory, creative, and innovative works. If you are unsure what it means in your discipline, ask a professor in your home program or your college Honors Advocate.
  - You must give a public presentation or exhibition of your work.
  - This work may be done at another university (e.g., NSF REU programs). In this case, your faculty mentor must send correspondence to the Honors Program describing the research experience, and confirming your successful completion.

### Research Component

There are two ways that research can count towards your Honors Program requirements. First, all students must complete one of the options below to satisfy the 3 point requirement. Second, you can earn additional points for research once you've completed your requirement.

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<sup>2</sup> The list of exceptions is overseen by the Honors Curriculum Committee of the Academic Senate, which is a body of faculty with representatives from each college.

- **Independent Research, supervised by a faculty mentor**
  - Research is understood broadly to include investigative, exploratory, creative, and innovative works. If you are unsure what it means in your discipline, ask a professor in your home program or your college Honors Advocate.
  - You must give a public presentation or exhibition of your work.
  - This work may be done at another university (e.g., NSF REU programs). In this case, your faculty mentor must send correspondence to the Honors Program describing the research experience, and confirming your successful completion.
- **Approved courses (Senior theses, senior capstones, senior projects and other culminating works)**
  - Students may fulfill the Research Requirement through completion of required coursework in their degree programs. Please click [here](#) for a list of currently approved courses that fulfill the Research/Experiential Learning Requirement.

## How to Submit Honors Points

Once you have completed Honors work, there are two ways that Points will be awarded to your account:

- **Points Submission is Completed on the Honors Website**

Most ways you are eligible to earn Honors Points require your action to submit a completion form on [honors.rit.edu](https://honors.rit.edu). You can access the submission form [here](#) or through your My Status page on the Honors Portal. The following options require this method:

- Faculty Sponsored Research
- Approved Research Courses
- International Experience
- Non-Required Co-ops/Internships
- Graduate Course
- Honors Option

Please fill out this form and provide us with the appropriate contact information requested **at the end of your experience**.

- **Points are Automatically Added to your Profile**

Points earned from Honors Courses and Honors Seminars are automatically pulled into your status. Once grades have been verified in SIS at the end of the semester, the Points should appear on your profile for Honors Courses. These options require **no further action on your part**. This also applies to waivers for Internal Admit students.

You can see how many Points you have earned on your Honors Status page [here](#), also accessible through the Honors Portal. If you have questions at any time, please reach out to [honors@rit.edu](mailto:honors@rit.edu).

## Internal Admission (IA)

Students who join the RIT Honors Program through the spring Internal Admission process are treated as members of the cohort that will enter RIT in the fall, and with the exception of the Honors First Year Seminar, they are expected to meet the academic requirements specified for that cohort.

For example, a student who is accepted to the Honors Program in the spring of 2017 is part of the cohort that enters in the fall of 2017, and is expected to meet the academic requirements specified for that cohort.

## Complementary Learning

Some kinds of learning are best accomplished outside the classroom, so an important part of the Honors Program is participation in activities that complement traditional academic work. Students in the Honors Program are expected to complete at least 15 hours of complementary learning in the first year, and 20 hours each year thereafter. These hours typically involve service to the community, and participating in events that expose students to new cultures or challenge their ways of thinking about their relationship to larger society.

## Leave of Absence (LOA)

An official leave of absence (LOA) from the university is understood as a pause in a student's pursuit of a degree from RIT. This pause extends to all aspects of education. For this reason, the complementary learning requirement will be prorated according to when a student takes the LOA and for how long. For example, a student who takes a half-year LOA is responsible for half of the year's complementary learning hours. A student who takes a year-long LOA is exempted from that year's complementary learning requirement. If you are considering a LOA, contact the Honors Office in order to confirm the specifics of your complementary learning requirement.

## Co-op and Study Abroad

Students who are on co-op, or who are engaging in an extended study abroad experience are understood to be actively pursuing a degree from RIT. They are responsible for completing the standard complementary learning requirement.

## Honors Grants

Each student in the RIT Honors Program is eligible for up to \$500 in grant funding to support research, professional travel, and study abroad (whether as a one-time expense, or as multiple smaller expenses). The application and supplemental forms can be found on the Honors web site. [The application form](#), [W-9 form](#), and [determination of citizenship](#) must be submitted with receipts that show proof of purchase before the Honors Grant will be processed.

- Honors Grant money may be used to purchase supplies for research, but any items that are not consumed by the research become the property of RIT if they were purchased (in whole or in part) with Honors Grant money. Therefore, any student who applies to use grant money in this way will be required to provide a letter of support from a faculty member in which the faculty member agrees to assume responsibility for any unused supplies that are purchased (in part or in full) with Honors Grant money.
- Honors Grants are typically paid out as reimbursements once students have presented the Honors Program office with eligible receipts.
- The use of Honors Grant money must be approved in advance of the expense for which it is intended.

## Standing, Continuation, and Withdrawal

Progress toward completion is measured at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Students are in **good standing** provided that they have

- completed at least one honors point each year (checked each summer);
- a GPA that meets or exceeds the minimum shown in Table 1 (checked each semester);
- completed the annual complementary learning requirement (checked each spring);
- no conduct-related complaints or findings.

Students who are in good standing may continue as part of the RIT Honors Program. Students who are not in good standing may be withdrawn from the Honors Program, or placed on conditional status (see below). Students can check their status at the honors web site.

Table 1: Requirements and GPA Standards to Maintain Good Standing

Year-Level (Matriculated)	Overall GPA Required for Continuation	Minimum Points Required Per Year	Hours of Complementary Learning Per Year
1	3.2	3	≥ 15 hours
2	3.3	1	≥ 20 hours
3	3.4	1	≥ 20 hours
4	3.5	1	≥ 20 hours
5	3.5	1	≥ 20 hours

## Conditional Status

As deemed appropriate by the director of the Honors Program, students who are not in good standing may be moved to a **conditional status** rather than being withdrawn from the program.

Conditional status may be appropriate when a student's GPA has fallen below Honors Program standards (particularly in cases of unforeseen events that interfere with academic success, such as a global pandemic), but the student has enough time remaining at RIT to remedy the issue.

Conditional status may also be appropriate when students fail to complete complementary learning requirements but are enacting plans to remedy the situation. Such cases are addressed on an individual basis in consultation with the Honors Program staff and other advisors as deemed appropriate.

A student's conditional status may be maintained for at most two semesters, after which the student is expected to have demonstrated progress sufficient to be deemed in good standing. Students who do not meet this requirement will be withdrawn from the program.

### Conduct-Related Disciplinary Action

The RIT Honors Program takes seriously students' impact on the community, and their role as representatives of the university and the Honors Program. Students who accept the invitation to become part of the RIT Honors Program agree to conduct themselves with integrity, in a manner that maintains our university and society as a safe place for creativity, curiosity, constructive change, and free expression.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action **for conduct** if found responsible for a breach of RIT policy by the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Students may also face conduct-related disciplinary action for academic or personal behavior contrary to the values expressed in this document. Among this category are actions generally classified as bullying (including hazing), intimidation or discrimination. Also included are behaviors classified broadly as *dishonest* such as (but not limited to) academic dishonesty, the submission of fraudulent forms (e.g. complementary learning submissions, and forms related to honors options, study abroad, etc.), and inappropriate use of Honors Grant money.

Disciplinary action may include forfeiture of points, complementary learning hours, leadership roles (e.g., if seated as a member of the Honors Council), or standing. And if said conduct is judged to be egregious, a student may be withdrawn from the RIT Honors Program.

Additionally, the director of the Honors Program may terminate employment of student workers who engage in activity that is judged likely to damage the student community or the reputation of the RIT Honors Program.

### Appeals

Assignment of conditional status, and conduct-related disciplinary action (short of withdrawal) may not be appealed.

- **Appeal of Withdrawal Due to Insufficient-Progress**

A student may appeal a withdrawal due to insufficient progress toward completion (see Table 1). The appeal must arrive within one academic term of the decision (fall semester, spring semester, or summer), and should clearly and concisely explain why the decision should be reversed. Reversal of such a decision is at the discretion of the

director of the program, and will be made in consultation with the Honors Advocate of the student's home college.

- **Appeal of Withdrawal Due to Conduct**

If a student appeals a conduct-related withdrawal, a Review Committee shall be convened by the director of the Honors Program no later than the following fall or spring semester. The Review Committee should include at least three members drawn from the Honors Curriculum Committee and the board of college Advocates. The Review Committee may rely on written testimony and interviews when adjudicating the decision. Overturning the withdrawal decision requires a majority vote (at least 51%) of the Review Committee members.